

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, PFOR,, PK, AF

SUBJ: GOP CLAMPS DOWN ON OPPOSITION

SUMMARY: THE GOP INTRODUCED LEGISLATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 10 WHICH WOULD JAIL MEMBERS AS WELL AS OFFICE HOLDERS OF NAP AND COULD POSSIBLY LEAD TO THEIR LOSING THEIR SEATS IN PROVINCIAL OR FEDERAL ASSEMBLIES. THE SAME DAY A PPP-SPONSORED RALLY IN PESHAWAR LOOTED AND DESTROYED PROPERTY OF ALL THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. ARRESTS IN THE FRONTIER CONTINUE, WITHOUT ANY SPECIFIC ACCUSATION OF PERSONS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMB BLAST ON FEBRUARY 8 WHICH CUT DOWN SENIOR MINISTER SHERPAO. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, SPEAKING BEFORE EMERGENCY SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 10, CLAIMED THAT GOP STEPS AGAINST THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) WERE NECESSARY TO SAVE "PAKISTAN FROM THE SCOURGE OF SECESSION AND THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED."

WITHOUT NAMING NAP OR ITS LEADER WALI KHAN BY NAME HE

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SAID THAT CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BOASTED

OF THEIR "FOREIGN LINKS", HAD THREATENED THE USE OF GUNS AND BOMBS AND REFUSED TO CONDEMN THOSE OUTSIDE OF PAKISTAN WORKING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

2. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PASSED THE FIRST OF THREE REQUIRED READINGS ON THREE SEPARATE BILLS WHICH STRENGTHENS THE GOVERNMENT'S HAND IN DEALING WITH SUBVERSIVE PARTIES. THE FIRST REMOVES THE IMMUNITY FROM DETENTION OF MEMBERS OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES "FOR REASON OF STATE CONNECTED WITH DEFENSE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OR THE SECURITY OF PAKISTAN OR ANY PART THEREOF". (CURRENT LAW GIVES THEM THIS IMMUNITY WHILE THE APPROPRIATE ASSEMBLY IS IN SESSION AND FOR THE PROCEEDING AND FOLLOWING 14 DAYS.) TWO OTHER BILLS AMENDED THE POLITICAL PARTIES ACT: (1) TO PERMIT THE GOVERNMENT TO DECLARE A FOREIGN-AIDED POLITICAL PARTY AS AN UNLAWFUL ORGANIZATION (SUBJECT TO SUPREME COURT REVIEW), AND (2) TO ENHANCE THE PENALTY FOR BEING A MEMBER OR OFFICE BEARER OF A DISSOLVED POLITICAL PARTY FROM TWO TO THREE YEARS. THE FIRST BILL APPEARS DESIGNED TO LEGALIZE THE ARREST OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS ON FEBRUARY 9; THE SECOND TO LINK NAP WITH AFGHANISTAN; THE THIRD TO IMPOSE A JAIL SENTENCE ON NAP MEMBERS WHICH COULD REMOVE THEM FROM ALL ASSEMBLIES AND PREVENT THEM FROM CAMPAIGNING IN 1977.

3. THE OPPOSITION, WHILE CONDOLING THE DEATH OF SHERPAO AND DEPLORING THE RISE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, ARGUED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS USING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PUT DOWN ITS POLITICAL OPPONENTS. ACTING LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION MUFTI MAHMOOD (JAMIATUL-ULEMA-I-ISLAM --;9 '78) ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TAKEN AS STRONG A STAND WHEN OPPOSITION LEADERS HAD BEEN KILLED IN RECENT YEARS AND ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF INSTITUTING ONE PARTY RULE BECAUSE IT WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF OPPOSITION LEADERS. SARDAR SHAUKAT HAYAT (COUNCIL MUSLIM LEAGUE) DENIED THAT THE SECURITY OF PAKISTAN WAS A DANGER AND MIAN MAHMUD ALI KASURI (TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL) ARGUED THAT THE ARRESTS AND BAN ON NAP WOULD CREATE ANARCHY AND THAT SUCH POLITICAL CON-

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FRONTATION COULD DESTROY THE COUNTRY.

4. IN ADDITION TO IMPLICATIONS OF KABUL COMPLICITY (SEPTEL), THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA FEBRUARY 11 CONDEMNED NAP FOR HAVING "CROSSED THE BOUNDARY OF LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ACTIVITY" (PAKISTAN TIMES, JANG, TAMEER, MUSAWAT) AND ECHOED THE THEME -- FIRST HEARD IN THE EARLY CONDOLENCE MESSAGES OF THE PPP-FAITHFUL --

THAT NAP'S DISSOLUTION WAS REQUIRED TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN. INDEPENDENT URDU-LANGUAGE DAILY, NAWAIWAGT, ARTICULATED THE RESERVATIONS BEING SAID PRIVATELY BY MANY NON-PARTISAN OBSERVERS AND SOME WITHIN THE RULING PARTY: THE MOVE TO BAN THE NAP AND ARREST ITS LEADERS WAS HASTY AND SHOULD HAVE AWAITED PROOF OF NAP AND THE GOA'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PESHAWAR UNIVERSITY BLAST. ADDITIONALLY, NAWAIWAQT EDITORIALIZED ON FEBRUARY 11 THAT THE ARREST OF MODERATE LEADERS OF NAP WILL ONLY EXACERBATE THE PROBLEM, LEAVING THE LEADERSHIP IN YOUNGER, EXTREMIST HANDS, "THOSE WHO WANT SEPARATION ON THE PATTERN OF BANGLADESH".

5. CONSUL EVERTS IN PESHAWAR REPORTS THAT ALL NAP MPAS, MNAS AND SENATORS IN THE FRONTIER HAVE BEEN ARRESTED OR HAVE OUTSTANDING ORDERS FOR THEIR ARREST OF UP TO 300 NAP MEMBERS AND SYMPATHIZERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN THE PROVINCE IN THE PAST THREE DAYS INCLUDING VILLAGE AND TEHSIL PARTY LEADERS AND, REPORTEDLY, ALL THE TOP STUDENT LEADERS OF PRO-NAP STUDENT FEDERATIONS IN PESHAWAR. A PPP-ORGANIZED PROCESSION OF FROM 15 TO 20,000 PERSONS ZZUND THROUGH THE CITY STREETS YESTERDAY FOR FIVE HOURS WHICH RAISED SLOGANS AGAINST NAP AND WALI KHAN. THE CROWDS LOOTED AND DESTROYED OPPOSITION PARTY OFFICES (JUI, TEHRIK, NAP) AND SOME BUSINESSES BELONGING TO NAP SYMPATHIZERS. THE CONSUL SAID PESHAWAR WAS MORE PEACEFUL FEBRUARY 11, WITH SMALL PROCESSIONS OF 100 TO 150 PERSONS SEEN CARRYING BLACK FLAGS AND PLACARDS.
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